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**THE STANISLAUS COUNTY NUTRITION EDUCATION & OBESITY PREVENTION PROGRAM AND  
CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE HOST FRUIT & VEGGIE FEST 2017  
Local Families Learn to “Refresh Better” and Cut Sugary Drinks  
at Fruit & Veggie Fest 2017**

**Stanislaus County** residents joined together to kick the sugary-drink habit, and instead, refresh better with water during a special celebration created by the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency’s (SCHSA) *Nutrition Education & Obesity Prevention (NEOP)* program and *Champions for Change* as part of the statewide *Be Better* campaign. Fruit & Veggie Fest 2017 brought health education to Cost Less Foods in Ceres on Friday afternoon, May 12<sup>th</sup>. The celebration included a large selection of fruit-infused waters to sample, dancing with a live radio-remote from KMIX, Zumba with Bailoterapia Que Te Mueve and performances from the Modesto Police Activities League Baile Folklorico traditional dance group. There was also a raffle featuring healthy products donated by local Stanislaus farms and businesses. The grand prizes included new bicycles and safety equipment awarded to two local residents. The event rallied more than 250 residents to consider drinking more water every day.

Most sodas, energy drinks, and sports drinks contain large amounts of sugar, increasing empty calories in many people’s diets. Drinking water every day is a healthy behavior that makes our whole body work better inside and out. Replacing sugary drinks with water may also help in the fight against obesity and being overweight, which according to the most recent Stanislaus County Community Health Assessment affects two in three adults and one in six children locally.

“Water is vital to our health and it is the best way to stay hydrated,” said Veronica Plaugher, a nutritionist and Stanislaus County Health Educator. “This fun celebration was designed to encourage our local families to switch and drink water instead of sugary drinks at least once each day. Small steps like this can quickly add up to big health benefits.” By providing education about healthy choices like tasty and nutritious options for flavoring water, healthy cooking tips, and resources to help families be active, the *NEOP* program and *Champions for Change* give communities the tools they need to make good health a priority.

“If more people can pick up the habit of drinking more water, we’ll all be a lot healthier,” said Del Ambris, manager at Cost Less Foods. “I drink water anywhere I go, a bottle of water, a cup of water. Personally, I’ve made that change and I encourage others to do the same. Phrases like Rethink Your Drink have really helped me to think about the little choices in my life that can help me stay healthy.”

California Champions for Change like Del Ambris are finding ways to be better every day, including eating healthier, getting active, and drinking water instead of sugary drinks. For more information or to learn how to become a *Champion for Change*, visit [CaChampionsForChange.net](http://CaChampionsForChange.net).



This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health’s Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit [www.CaChampionsForChange.net](http://www.CaChampionsForChange.net).